R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 020 041 RC 001 455

HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY AIDE PROGRAM.

BY- ERICKSON, JOHN
SWEETWATER UNION HIGH SCHOOL, CHULA VISTA, CALIF.

PUB DATE 68

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.80 18P.

DESCRIPTORS- *AUXILIARY LABORERS, ANCILLARY SERVICES, *COMMUNICATIONS, COMMUNITY INFLUENCE, CULTURAL INTERRELATIONSHIPS, COOPERATIVE PLANNING, DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, *ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGEMENT, ENGLISH (SECOND LANGUAGE), FAMILY SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP, INTERESTS, INTERACTION, INTERGROUP RELATIONS, LANGUAGE HANDICAPS, MEXICAN AMERICANS, PARENT COUNSELING, PARENT ATTITUDES, PERSONNEL NEEDS, PUBLIC SUPPORT, SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, SPANISH SPEAKING, SPECIALISTS, STAFF ROLE, COMMUNITY AIDE PROGRAM,

ONE METHOD OF ATTEMPTING TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ECONOMICALLY OR CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IS THROUGH A COMMUNITY LIAISON PROGRAM UTILIZING COMMUNITY AIDES TO INFORM THE COMMUNITY OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHOOL AND AVAILABLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, TO INFORM THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND TO SUGGEST MEANS BY WHICH SUCH NEEDS MAY BE MET. THE 4 PHASES IN THE EVOLUTION OF AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY AIDE PROGRAM ARE (1) IDENTIFICATION OF FAMILIES IN NEED OF COMMUNITY AIDE SERVICES, (2) HOME CONTACTS, (3) PARENT MEETINGS, AND (4) INDEPENDENT PARENT PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS. A COMMUNITY LIAISON PROGRAM PROVIDES GREATEST BENEFITS TO FAMILIES THAT ARE ECONOMICALLY AND/OR LINGUISTICALLY DISADVANTAGED. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES MUST BE DEVISED AND IMPLEMENTED WITH AN AWARENESS OF COMMUNITY CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS. PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEES ARE ONE MEANS OF ENCOURAGING PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION. (DA)

ED020041

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY AIDE PROGRAM

PREPARED FOR

SWEETWATER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

BY

JOHN ERICKSON
COMMUNITY AIDE

1968

RC 001453

INTRODUCTION

The complex educational problems of the economically or culturally disadvantaged student are often the result of limited or non-existant communications between the home and the school. If the parents do not understand the academic requirements of the school, they cannot successfully encourage their children to meet those requirements. Likewise, if the school is not aware of the specialized needs of the community it is serving, it cannot be successful in adequately educating the children of that community.

In those communities where the needs and social problems are different from the standard needs of most communities, a standard educational system cannot be successful, unless effective Community Liason is established to relate the needs of the community to the goals of the educational program.

Part of the success of the school-Community Liason program depends largely upon the staffing of the liason personnel with persons knowledgeable in the field of education as well as being aware of the problems of the community. The other part depends upon the willingness of the schools to adjust a standard educational program to meet the specialized needs of the community.

The two basic goals of the Community Liason workers or Community Aides are: 1) to inform the community on the requirements of the school and on available educational opportunities; 2) to inform the educational system on the educational needs of the community and to suggest means by which they can be met.

The following outline of the suggested procedures for establishing an efficient Community Liason program will serve to give the reader a general perspective of the organizational steps discussed in the handbook:

I STAFF

- A. One Community Aide for every one-hundred to two-hundred families to be contacted.
- B. A full time secretary for the general program.
- C. A Community Aide coordinator for programs serving more than one-thousand families.

II PHASE I

- A. Identification of families in need of Community Aide services.
  - 1. Economically disadvantaged
    - a) welfare agencies
    - b) other community agencies

2. Culturally or linguistically disadvantaged
   a) questionnaires/interviews
   b) community agencies

3. Problem students

4. Interviews
   a) administration
   b) faculty
   c) students

III PHASE II

Home contacts

A. Questionnaires

B. Announcements

C. Home calls

IV PHASE III

Parent Meetings

A. Small neighborhood meetings

B. Larger meetings at school

C. Parent representation at meetings

   1. Parent Advisory Committee
   2. Parent Advisory Committee Meetings

V PHASE IV

Independent parent participation and representation in school programs and affairs.

I STAFF

The recruitment of qualified and adequate staff is essential to the success of a Community Liason Program.

Community Aide

Those involved in direct communications with the community must be able to empathize with and understand community problems and must possess those special talents necessary for adequate communications, i.e. fluency in Spanish if working in a Mexican-American or Latin-American community.

Besides possessing those special qualities necessary for good communications, the Community Aide must have a sound grasp of educational principles to be able to assist the school in relating the special needs of the community to the school program. Because the Community Aide will be working with teachers, counselors, principals and vice-principals on a professional basis, he should have similar educational status. For obvious reasons, employing a person in this position with less educational background would jeopardize the effectiveness of the program.

To be able to provide adequate Community Liason services and parent counseling, each Community Aide should be limited to one-hundred to two-hundred families. This number could be extended to three-hundred if the Community Aide is provided with a part-time or full-time assistant to make home contacts for parent meetings and programs, particularly during the initial phases of the program.

For programs serving more than one-thousand families, a Community Aide Coordinator should be selected from the Community Aide staff to coordinate activities, programs, information, etc.., so that general approaches to community educational problems can be explored and initiated.

Office Staff

Secretarial staff should also complement the goals of the program, particularly in programs involving Mexican-American or Latin-American communities, and where Spanish and cultural understanding are needed in handling all types of communications. In these cases the office staff must be bilingual.

PHASE I

Determining the Educational Needs of the Community

Identification of families in need of Community Liason program.

Those families that will derive the most benefit from the Community Liason program can be divided into two general categories; 1) economically disadvantaged and 2) - culturally or linguistic disadvantaged.

The first category is the most easily identified in accordance with economic criteria established by the standards of the general community. Specific information or statistics in every community, can be obtained through the local Department of Public Welfare or through the local anti-poverty agencies.

The second category is the most difficult to define adequately, as determining those factors which constitute linguistic or cultural handicaps are not always easily identified. The most obvious cases, such as the newly-immigrated family present little problem when looking for linguistically or culturally disadvantaged families. However, in immigrant communities such as the large Mexican-American communities in California, a vast variety of linguistic and cultural handicaps can be identified over and above those faced by the monolingual Spanish-speaking immigrant. Thorough identification of all segments of the linguistically or culturally disadvantaged community is essential to the complete success of the Community Liason program.

Dividing the community into two basic categories will enhance the effectiveness of Community Liason efforts:

Group I

Those families who are markedly disadvantaged because of linguistic and cultural handicaps. These families represent the most obvious characteristics of the disadvantaged population; low income for the family and poor or limited academic achievement by the children.

Group II

Those families who have varying degrees of linguistic and cultural handicaps and have made either partial or complete social adjustment. Within this group the more subtle and often unidentified academic problems flourish. While the majority of these families have social adjustment problems, many have made satisfactory social adjustment, are economically secure and the children are doing well at school. The families from this category should be contacted and cultivated to provide the community leadership to complement the efforts of the Community Liason staff. Identification of these families can be easily by means of a general questionnaire administered to all students at the target school.

The following model questionnaire was developed for use at the Sweetwater Union High School District where the Community Liason program was designed to work with Spanish-speaking community in the district. Vital information for the Community Aide program as well as information of interest to the counselors was obtained through the questionnaire.

SWEETWATER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
ESEA - Title I

COMMUNITY AIDE QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME Enrique Ortiz GRADE 7-12 PHONE 423-3003

ADDRESS 772 - 8th. St. SCHOOL southwest Jr. Hi.

1. Which is your favorite class? P. E.

2. Do you know the names of:

   The Principal YES ✓ NO ____

   The Vice Principal YES ✓ NO ____

   Your Counselor YES ✓ NO ____

3. Do you participate in school activities? YES ✓ NO ____

   Which? ASB ✓ DANCES ____ OTHER here

4. Do your parents belong to PTA? YES ____ NO ✓

5. Do you subscribe to a newspaper? YES ____ NO ✓

6. Do you subscribe to a magazine? YES ____ NO ✓

7. Do you have a library card? YES ____ NO ✓

8. Do you ever go to the public library? YES ____ NO ✓

9. Do you ever use the school library? YES ✓ NO ____

10. How do you help at home?

    Wash dishes ____ Make beds ✓ Baby sit ____

    Yard work ____ Other CLEAN CAR.

    How often? Everyday ✓ Once a week ____ Sometimes ____

11. How much time do you spend studying outside of school?

    None ____ 15 min. ✓ 1/2 hour ____ 1 hour ____

    2 hours ✓ More ✓ how much ✓

12. When do you usually study outside of school?

    Morning ____ Afternoon ____ Evening ✓

13. Do you have a comfortable place to study? (YES) ✓ NO ____

14. Do you read books other than school books? YES ✓ NO ____

15. Do you have any brothers and/or sisters? YES ✓ NO ____

If yes, how many? Brothers 5 Sisters 0

16. Do you speak a language other than English? YES ✓ NO ____

If yes, what language? Spanish.

17. Is a language other than English spoken at home? used

By whom?		How often?			
Father ____	Always ✓	Usually ____	Seldom ____
Mother ____	Always ✓	Usually ____	Seldom ____
Brother ____	Always ✓	Usually ____	Seldom ____
Sister ____	Always ____	Usually ____	Seldom ____

18. When are your parents or guardians at home?

Morning ____ Time _____

Afternoon ____ Time _____

Evening ____ Time _____

All the time ✓

John R. Erickson
Community Aide

JRE:cl
9/25/67

Filing Cards

The information from the questionnaire can then be transferred to Community Aide filing cards. These cards should then be arranged in geographical order according to small neighborhood blocks of twenty to thirty families. This procedure will facilitate home contact and neighborhood meeting organization

Some vital information, such as the family's linguistic habits should be coded in a space in the filing card for easy reference. The coded information has been circled on this model Filing Card.

Sweetwater Union High School District
ESEA EVALUATION TITLE I
COMMUNITY AIDE PROGRAM

Family-Spanish-
Always
Home- all the time

Student's name Enrique Valdirio Date _____

Home Address 772 24th St.. I.B. School Southwest Jr. High

Class (Circle One) ESL Remedial Reading SB28 Other Teacher _____

Teacher's comments concerning student's progress. _____

Vice principal's comments, if any, regarding attendance, general adjustment to school, etc.

Form No. 7226-67

REPORT OF HOME VISIT

Date of Visit _____

General reaction of parent (guardian) to visit by the Community Aide (accepting, apprehensive, etc.) _____

_____

Brothers or sisters in other schools: _____ (Name) _____ (School)

_____ (Name) _____ (School) _____ (Name) _____ (School)

Describe degree of parent awareness of school's program _____

_____

Significant social or health information concerning student or family _____

_____

_____

Has parent previously visited the school? _____ Yes _____ No

_____
Signature of Community Aide

INTERVIEWS

School Personnel - Administration and Faculty

Although the Community Aide will maintain close contact with school personnel throughout the course of the Community Liason program, initial interviews with the administrative staff and faculty will provide the Community Aide with vital information on school policies, school programs, impressions of the community and its specific educational problems. An excellent time for these interviews would be while the questionnaires are being processed.

Students

Although some student impressions of the school administration and faculty tend to be exaggerated and unrealistic, these are often the only impressions of the school that reach the parents, especially in areas where little home-school communication have previously taken place. These parents will invariably reflect the same attitude towards the school and education in general as their children.

The Community Aide will have to engender a good rapport with the students so that they will feel confident in candidly stating their attitudes towards the school program. Favorable student reactions to the community will be markedly reflected by the parents when he makes home contacts.

In familiarizing himself with the the students, particulary some "problem" students, the Community Aide will find that in many cases the nature of the student's role at home and his role at school are quite different. The apparent irresponsible student may be required to fulfill important responsibilities at home, the Community Aide should assist in cultivating these same attitudes at school. On the other hand, the incorrigible student may also be the incorrigible child. These cases offer fertile grounds for individualized home-school student counseling.

Community Agencies

Agencies and organizations working within the community are valuable sources of general information on the community's attitude towards education and will offer some clues as to what the specific educational problems are in the community. If empirical data is needed for surveys or reports, welfare workers with cases in the area may be able to provide vital statistics on educational problems common to certain segments of the community.

PHASE II

Home Contacts - Announcements

To avoid initial misinterpretations of the Community Liason program or of the initial home visit by the Community Aide, a brief letter sent from the school, informing the parents that a representative from the school will be calling at their home, is very effective. These letters should be sent out to the geographical groups shortly before the Community Aide plans to call on the parents in those areas. This not only avoids sending large quantities of mail at one time, but keeps the information current in the minds of those parents to be contacted. Sending the notices through the U.S. Mail service is much more effective than sending them home with the students, as

a large percentage of such communications never reach the home. Those parents who are not accustomed to communicating with the school seldom pay much attention to correspondence sent to them by the school. These same parents, however, are normally much more impressed by any correspondence they receive by mail and are usually much more conscientious about the meeting requests made to them in this manner. The information in the letter should be kept general avoiding specific dates, etc., so that the form letter does not become out-dated.

The following form letter was used by the Sweetwater Union High School District to make the initial introduction of the Community Liason program to the Spanish-speaking parents in the district.

Sweetwater Union High School District

ADMINISTRATION CENTER
1130 FIFTH AVENUE
CHULA VISTA, CALIFORNIA 92011

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Estimados Padres:

Como un esfuerzo más de parte de la escuela para amplificar sus relaciones con la comunidad, en unos pocos días el Sweetwater Union High School District enviará a un representante a visitarle y a invitarlo a que asista a una junta informal en su vecindad para discutir el programa escolar.

Estamos interesados en sus preguntas y opiniones; por favor traten de asistir a esta junta cuando se les invite.

Sinceramente,

Ward T. Donley

Ward T. Donley
Director de Proyectos Especiales

John Erickson

John Erickson
Ayudante de la Comunidad

WTD:JE:mm

Home Calls

With the form letter having already made the introduction, the Community Aide will find that his initial visit will be wellreceived. However, parents will probably be reluctant to discuss educational problems until later visits when he gains their confidence.

The first home visit should be concentrated on a simple introduction of the services offered by the Community Aide and an invitation to a small neighborhood parent meeting (ten to fifteen parents) where the parents can informally discuss problems dealing with education with a representative from the school, and inform themselves on the school program and educational opportunities.

Phone calls

To insure effective parent participation a telephone call shortly before the planned neighborhood meeting reminding parents of the importance of the discussion group will have excellent results.

PHASE III

Parent Meetings - General Suggestions

Following two basic principles, the community aide should be able to capture and maintain parent interest; these principles are: 1) never have a meeting unless you have a purpose. Don't expect the parents to attend the meetings with prepared discussions or materials. The Community Aide is responsible for providing materials and information that are both important and interesting to the parents. The point of business should be established and settled as quickly as possible, Discussions of problems will gradually develop naturally as an essential part of the meetings. The Community Aide will have to cultivate the confidence of the parents so that they will feel free to discuss their problems at these meetings.
2) The shorter the meeting the better; avoid belaboring topics or discussions, don't allow the discussions to wander into areas that have nothing to do with the general topic of education. If parents have special personal problems that might not be of interest to the group as a whole, they should be discussed after the meeting has been formally adjourned.

Initial Meetings

Neighborhood Parent Discussion Groups

The first meetings held in the neighborhood are the most crucial to the success of the Community Liason Program. If parents are favorably impressed with the information presented at the discussion groups, they will not only attend subsequent meetings but will also bring neighbors and friends.

Meeting size

The neighborhood discussion groups should be planned to include eight to fifteen persons. A group this size is ideal for encouraging parent discussion. Most parents tend to feel more anonymous in a group and feel more at ease about discussing their problems. If, however, the group is too large many parents tend to feel embarrassed and do not participate readily in discussions. Small group meetings engender a personal atmosphere that is often lacking in most school meetings and can easily be held in private homes or community centers.

PREPARATION

For the first series of meetings with the parents, the Community Aide should be adequately prepared to carry the major part of the discussion. He should have enough interesting material to keep the parents interested for approximately one hour. If the parents become interested in any one point or topic the Community Aide will probably not finish with his prepared materials. At this point parent participation in the discussion is the essential element and must be encouraged at the risk of not presenting all of the prepared information.

This model outline for the first parent meetings proved successful at the Sweetwater Union High School District:

I Introduction to the Community Aide program

- A. Services to the community and school.
  (emphasis given to well-being of children)
- B. How community (parents) can assist the program
  (emphasis given to their interest in their children's well-being)

II Possible educational projects and programs of interest to parents.

- A. Improvement of educational facilities
  1. School
  2. Public Library
- B. Improvement of educational program through parent suggestion.
- C. Adult educational programs of special interest to parents.
- D. Community-school cultural programs.

III. Questions about school program and functions of school personnel.

The following questions about the school are asked with the intent of putting the parents on the spot in a friendly way and encouraging discussion. These questions should be directed at individual parents:

A. How do you like the school program?

B. What classes is your child taking at school?

C. What are his favorite classes? (subjects)

D. Who are some of his/her teachers?

E. How do you like the school principal?

What is his name?

What are his duties?

F. Do you know the vice-principal?

What is his name?

What are his duties?

G. Do you know the counselors? (for secondary schools)

What are their names?

What are their duties?

H. How can these people help your child:

get a good job?

go to college?

be happy in life?

I. How can you as a parent work with these people to help your child?

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The questions contained in the model outline should be asked directly of individual parents thus obligating them to answer the questions or admit that they don't know the answer. The Community Aide must be careful not to ask these questions in an offensive fashion, those parents who don't know will feel embarrassed, but will listen attentively to a tactful explanation of unanswered questions.

Each topic should suggest questions or comments to the parents. By asking them questions directly, the parents will feel encouraged to participate verbally

in the discussion.

As the parents gain confidence in the Community Aide, many problems will be called to his attention. He should not be alarmed at complaints, no matter how serious they might be or sound. Complaints may either concern personal difficulties involving the school or misinterpretation of school functions and responsibilities. In some cases the complaints may be symptoms of legitimate and more far-reaching educational problems. The Community Aide should avoid making issues of personal problems but should stress their general importance and relate them to the general needs of the community.

All complaints as well as questions should be included in the minutes of the meeting for immediate reference and information by the Community Aide as well as school administrators and faculty members.

Reactions of the main points and problems discussed at the meeting should be for immediate reference and planning topics for discussion when larger meetings are held.

Parent Representation at School

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

At each neighborhood discussion group, certain parents will show more leadership initiative than others. The Community Aide should encourage the group to select a representative or spokesman to meet with representatives from other parent discussion groups to express the problems and questions brought up in the individual group discussions. As many parents who are uninformed on school policies often fear reprisals in the form of suspension of their children from school, the Community Aide should stress that the spokesman will merely present the material discussed at the neighborhood meeting and will not be singled out on an individual basis.

The representatives from each parent group can be a central source for information and contacts for the Community Liason program. Other parents should be encouraged to contact them when they have questions or problems. The parent representative can either refer them directly to the Community Aide or can relay the question or problem to the Community Aide. The representatives can be invaluable to the program for recruiting parents in their neighborhoods for parent participation program at the school.

Parent Advisory Committee Meetings

Once all neighborhood discussion meetings have been held and representatives from each neighborhood have been selected, a special meeting for the Parent Advisory Committee should then be held. For more efficient representation on the part of the spokesman, they should be supplied with a brief resume of the points covered and agreed upon at the neighborhood meeting. Points discussed in the meeting should be organized according to topic for discussion at a general parent meeting or with the principal of the school.

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

Representation at school

Once the parent advisory committee has been coached sufficiently to articulate the educational needs of the community, two important steps follow; the sequence is left to the discretion of the community aide:

1) a meeting with the principal of the school and the PAC to discuss the agreed points of community concern on education.
2) Organize a general school-community meeting to include parents and school personnel, during which the PAC can represent the community as an active organization before the community and before the school personnel.

The suggested sequence is to organize the general school-community meeting first and then allow the meeting with the principal and faculty to serve as follow-up procedures.

Follow up procedures

To encourage community participation at school, the C.A. should encourage small parent groups to visit faculty members to discuss specific requirements of courses and individual progress of students. The parents from the PAC should be involved in these visits to familiarize them more thoroughly with their role and their community responsibilities.

Subsequent PAC meetings should be encouraged to discuss opinions, impressions and neighborhood problems. The Community Aide will probably have to help plan the agenda for the meetings.

PHASE IV

Independent Parent Participation

As the PAC meetings gather momentum, the Community Aide should start delegating certain key responsibilities to individuals from the PAC. The Community Aide will find himself taking a lesser part in encouraging dialogues in the Parent Advisory Committee meetings. A special community-school program should be planned to test the effectiveness of the PAC in recruiting interested parents. As the members of the PAC become recognized as an essential communication with the school, parents will feel free to communicate their educational problems with them. The Community Aide should then suggest programs but allow the parents to take the initiative. As the parents learn to represent themselves, the Community Aide will gradually begin to disengage himself from meeting participation by delegating more responsible community members to carry the main role during the parents meetings.

After planning a meeting with adequate representation from responsible community elements, the Community Aide should plan to be absent, after distributing the agenda to all interested participants. This is the real test of the organizational strength of the PAC. If the PAC achieves a positive program under the above mentioned criteria, the program has proved to be adequate to this point. The Community Aide must be available during the initial independent steps of the PAC to assist in any difficulties in programming, school communications or whatever special problems arise. At this point, his role begins to change from community organizer to community advisor. The community will be able to express its needs before the school administration with the confidence that their needs will be met with adequate adjustments in the school program.

Follow through programs.

The Community Aide should consult with all members of the PAC to investigate problems that need more extensive consideration for further negotiation with school administration. These will undoubtedly be the most difficult problems to be solved and will require the special talents of qualified community-school Liason personnel.

As the general educational needs of the community are successfully met, the Community Aide can begin to dedicate more time to individual parent-school problems. At this point a new field of parent-student counseling offers vast opportunities to the concerned creative individual.